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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/26/2015
TAGS: [IZ](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [UNSC](#)
SUBJECT: FUTURE OF IRAQ COALITION

Classified By: PM Acting A/S Rose M. Likins. Reasons 1.4 (B) - (D)

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request. See paragraph 5.

BACKGROUND

[1](#)2. (S) Status of the coalition: Many MNF partners are considering troop reductions or withdrawals after Iraq's January elections. Others have mandates that will expire this summer and will be more difficult to renew than in the past. The departures and downsizing we currently expect will increase the pressure on other governments to follow suit before the MNF's mandate under UNSCR 1546 expires, i.e., upon the completion of Iraq's political transition. As that political process continues throughout 2005, the presence of coalition forces will remain an issue in Iraqi political debate.

[1](#)3. (S) MNF-I is currently reviewing its strategy in Iraq, and some Coalition partners may be led to believe this will have an early effect on force levels. This is not likely to be the case in the short term. MNF-I is currently considering shifting some emphasis after the January 30 elections to training and increasing the capacity of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) by embedding military and police trainers in ISF units. We do NOT/NOT expect near-term operational implications either for U.S. force levels or for the security missions of our Coalition partners. However, some discussion of this potential strategy has appeared in the press and been discussed in military channels over the last few weeks.

Therefore, we wish to immediately engage with coalition partners to: (1) avoid coalition capitals hearing about draft military plans through media or strictly military channels; (2) assure our coalition partners that there will be no dramatic shifts in MNF-I military commitments after the January elections; (3) inform our coalition partners of the possibility of strategy adaptation; (4) bring our partners, political leadership into the decision-making process as the employment of MNF-I forces is being discussed; and (5) encourage a continued coalition presence in Iraq after the 30 January election and through the conclusion of Iraq's political transition.

14. (S) Department understands that this presentation may provoke questions from host governments. As answers are developed, we will endeavor to share them with you and with host governments. Finally, it will be important that discussion of possible changes occur discreetly in official channels and not in the press.

ACTION REQUEST

15. (S/REL MNF-I) Posts should approach host government officials at appropriate levels and deliver talking points.

BEGIN TALKING POINTS:

- Thank you for your steadfast support to coalition operations in Iraq. Your partnership is directly contributing to the security, prosperity, and democratic future of the Iraqi people.
- The international coalition of forces in Iraq continues to stand as a symbol to all Iraqis and all terrorists that the world stands behind those who promote peace and freedom.
- The Coalition will continue to play a critical role in Iraq after the January elections.
- Multinational Force-Iraq (MNF-I) leadership is currently reviewing its strategy for the spring and summer of 2005.
- Current MNF-I needs for forces and equipment will continue.
- While planning is still in the formative stages, military planners, in close coordination with the Iraqi government, are exploring increasing efforts to rapidly enhance Iraqi Security Force capacity. The goal is better-trained Iraqi forces capable of assuming increased responsibilities for Iraq's internal security by the end of the UNSCR 1546 mandate.
- This is consistent with our strategy to, as soon as practical, turn over security of Iraq to the Iraqis themselves.
- (If asked) NATO Training Mission Iraq (NTM-I) will continue as a separate but complementary effort to assist in the training of Iraqi Security Forces and support Iraqi security institutions.
- Current force sizes and missions are critical to successful elections at the end of this month. Shortly thereafter, tentatively February 22 - 23, MNF-I will host a contributors, conference, in Bucharest.
- At that conference, military planners will discuss the proposed strategy, timeframes, and associated force composition.
- An assessment team that just returned from Iraq is, among its other duties, looking at the new MNF-I concept. As these concepts are elaborated, we will continue to consult with you in political and military channels.
- We believe our fellow force contributors need to know that

planning is ongoing so that we can work together to make a successful transition. As always, we rely upon your utmost discretion.

- It may be useful, when more specifics of the plan are available, for us to discuss in both policy and military channels what type of adjustments might be feasible for your forces within the new MNF-I concept and consistent with your national policies.

- Thank you again for your continued partnership as we work to achieve our mutual goals of stability and democracy for the people of Iraq.

¶6. (U) End Points. Please slug messages to State for PM/RSAT, PM/PMAT, and EUR.

¶7. Minimize considered.
POWELL